

## Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 PM-03 INR-07 SP-02 EUR-08 NSC-05

NSCE-00 CIAE-00 L-01 EB-03 RSC-01 /051 W

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R 110622Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1815

SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONO HI

INFO DIA WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 0137

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, SN

SUBJECT: SOVIET SHIPPING IN THE STRAITS OF JOHORE AND SEM-  
BAWANG

REF: SINGAPORE 0074 (NOTAL)

1. DCM REVIEWED JANUARY 10 PROBLEM OF SOVIET SHIPPING IN STRAITS OF JOHORE AND SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD WITH UK DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER WATTS AND ASKED WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY CHANGE IN UK POLICY ON THIS MATTER. WATTS REFERRED TO THE RECENT CASE OF THE SOVIET NAVAL OILER AKHTUBA, AND SAID THAT AFTER SOME UNCERTAINTY AND REFERRAL TO LONDON, HIGH COMMISSION HAD INFORMED GOS THAT AS LONG AS UK WAS STILL IN CHARGE OF NAVAL BASIN (NEXT TO SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD) IT WAS OPPOSED TO HAVING ANY SOVIET SHIPS USE SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD. IT WAS ALSO GENERALLY OPPOSED TO HAVING ANY SOVIET SHIPPING IN THE STRAITS OF JOHORE, BUT WOULD NOT OBJECT TO SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPS OCCASIONALLY USING THE STRAITS OR EVEN PSA BERTHS IN BASIN (BUT NOT SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD) AS LONG AS ADEQUATE ADVANCE NOTICE WAS GIVEN.

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2. HIGH COMMISSION HAD ALSO INFORMED GOS THAT ONCE UK HAD WITHDRAWN FROM NAVAL BASIN IT WOULD NO LONGER BE IN A POSITION TO OBJECT TO SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPPING USING SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD, BUT ADVISED GOS THAT IN ITS OWN INTEREST IT SHOULD CONTINUE TO DENY SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPS ACCESS TO SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD.

3. WATTS SAID THAT UK LEVERAGE ON THIS MATTER WAS DWINDLING RAPIDLY AND WOULD BE COMPLETELY GONE ONCE UK FORCES HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN. HE POINTED OUT THAT SOVIET AND PRC MERCHANT SHIPS WERE UNDERCUTTING ESTABLISHED FREIGHT CONFERENCE RATES AND THAT GOS WAS OBVIOUSLY MOST RELUCTANT TO FORCE PRIVATE SHIPPERS TO USE FREIGHTERS CHARGING HIGHER RATES. HE ALSO NOTED THAT DURING PAST SIX MONTHS ONE CHINESE AND ONE SOVIET FREIGHTER HAD TAKEN ON TIMBER AT NEW PORT, PASIR GUDANG, BEING DEVELOPED BY MALAYSIA ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STRAITS. OBVIOUSLY GOS COULD NOT STAND BY AND LET MALAYSIANS HANDLE ALL THE TRADE IN THE STRAITS OF JOHORE.

4. COMMENT. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE FACTORS, BELIEVE IT IS UNREALISTIC FOR U.S. TO CONTINUE TO EXPECT GOS TO DENY SOVIET COMMERCIAL SHIPPING USE OF STRAITS OF JOHORE. FURTHERMORE, SINCE UK INFLUENCE HERE RAPIDLY WANING BELIEVE WE SHOULD NO LONGER LET BRITISH FRONT FOR US ON THIS ISSUE. BELIEVE WE SHOULD CONFINE OUR EFFORTS WITH GOS TO URGING (A) THAT NO SOVIET NAVAL SHIPS (REGULAR OR AUXILIARY) BE ALLOWED TO ENTER STRAITS; (B) THAT SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPS NOT BE PERMITTED TO USE SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD; AND (C) THAT EMBASSY/DAO BE GIVEN ADEQUATE ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF ANY USE OF STRAITS OF JOHORE BY SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPPING WHEN U.S. NAVY SHIPS ARE EITHER IN OR SCHEDULED INTO STORES BASIN OR SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD. WHILE EMBASSY BELIEVES THERE IS FAIRLY GOOD CHANCE THAT GOS MAY AGREE TO (A) AND (C), IT WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BALK AT (B) UNLESS U.S. PREPARED TO PUT IN SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF REPAIR WORK TO MAKE UP FOR LOSS OF ANTICIPATED SOVIET BUSINESS. IF USN NOT PREPARED TO DO THIS, RECOMMEND WE ADOPT FALLBACK POSITION THAT U.S. NAVY SHIPS BE GIVEN PREFERRED ACCESS TO SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD AND THAT SOVIET MERCHANT SHIPPING REPAIRS NOT BE SCHEDULED AT SEMBAWANG WHILE U.S. NAVY SHIPS ARE BEING REPAIRED THERE.

5. REQUEST DEPARTMENT ADVISE. CRONK  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** POLICIES, SHIPYARDS, NAVAL SHIPS, STRAITS, PRICES  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 11 JAN 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
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**TAGS:** MARR, MPOL, SN, UR  
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**Type:** TE  
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